

Luncheon Remarks. Timothy E. Wirth, Under Secretary for Global Affairs.
U.S. Department of State

**TALKING POINTS FOR U/S WIRTH
(Simultaneous interpretation provided.)**

**US-Japan Earthquake Symposium
September 17, 1996**

o On behalf of the State Department, I would like to welcome Minister Suzuki and the distinguished Japanese delegation to the United States and express my appreciation to Director James Lee Witt and the Federal Emergency Management Agency for hosting this important U.S.-Japan Earthquake Symposium.

o As many of you may know, the devastating and unfortunate Kobe earthquake of January 1995 occurred at a time when dozens of U.S. earthquake experts were attending a conference in Osaka. As much as we like to think we are a step ahead of events, this was mostly coincidence. I qualify that statement because the fact that our experts were in Osaka was reflective of the fact that our two nations have a burgeoning

relationship on issues of mutual interest and concern.

o That is why, in the aftermath of the Kobe quake, when Prime Minister Murayama asked President Clinton for enhanced cooperation on sharing information and finding better ways to predict and mitigate earthquake disasters, we had in place at that time a formal mechanism for addressing shared concerns and mutual interests – our Common Agenda.

o This joint undertaking, now three years old, has demonstrated the breadth and strength of our partnership. And through events such as this we are proving that working together – whether creating the technologies of tomorrow or reviewing recent natural disasters and common concerns – we can confront the most difficult challenges as we prepare for the 21st century.

o The Common Agenda embodies the vision of a prosperous and peaceful 21st century that our two countries share. Through the Common Agenda partnership, the U.S. and Japan are working together to combat problems that face not only our countries but all the countries in the world.

o As President Clinton stated at the Summit in Tokyo in April of this year the United States and Japan, as the world's strongest democracies and leading economies, have a special responsibility to lead. It is a time of great possibility, but it is also time of stern challenge. More and more, the problems we face are common. No one is immune from threats by terrorists, crime and drug trafficking, environmental decay, natural disasters and economic dislocation.

o That is why, through the Common Agenda, we are partners in addressing these serious global issues. As we have learned over the past three

years in working together on the Common Agenda, it is not only desirable, but imperative that our two countries work together to address the issues that increasingly define the priorities for the 21st century.

o At the Tokyo Summit, the President and Prime Minister agreed to expand the Common Agenda and launched five new initiatives. The new initiatives will address Global Food Supply, Infectious Diseases, Civil Society, Educational Technology and Natural Disaster Mitigation. These efforts will broaden and deepen our bilateral relationship, but just as important, our efforts will have a tangible effect on the quality of life enjoyed by our citizens and by people around the world.

o We appreciate the strong engagement and support of the Common Agenda provided by the Japanese government and people. Your participation today in this conference is valuable

in the context of working together on earthquake mitigation. But it is also valuable in strengthening the bilateral ties between our two countries.

o We can always accomplish far more by working together, than by working alone. The Common Agenda and your role here today exemplifies that belief. Thank you very much for your participation and again welcome.